

## MEETING RECORD

**NAME OF GROUP:** Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

**DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:** Thursday, April 22, 2004, 8:00 a.m., Room 206, County-City Building, 555 South 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Lincoln, Nebraska

### MEMBERS AND OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

**Members:** Jim Hewitt, Karen Kilgarin (arrived at 8:16 a.m.), Thomas Laging (departed at 8:34 a.m.), V.J. Nelson, Kim Todd present.  
**Patrick O'Donnell and Jeff Searcy absent.**

**Others:** Mark Canney and Stacey Ault (Parks and Recreation); Danny Schlichenmaier (Department of Administrative Services); Dallas McGee and Jeff Cole (Urban Development Department); Glen Cekal (Citizen); Ed Zimmer and Michele Abendroth (Planning Dept.)

**STATED PURPOSE OF THE MEETING:** Regular Meeting of the Nebraska Capitol Environs Commission

Mr. Laging called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

### *Approval of meeting notes of January 22, 2004*

Ms. Nelson moved to approve the January 22, 2004 minutes, seconded by Mr. Hewitt. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, and Todd voting 'yes'; Kilgarin, O'Donnell, and Searcy absent.

### **Application by Lincoln Parks and Recreation department for a Certificate of Appropriateness for adding sculpture to Centennial Mall between Q and R Streets.**

Mr. McGee stated that Urban Development Department is working with the Parks and Recreation Department on the streetscape and public spaces around the recently renamed Federal Place building and adjacent Old City Hall. This includes the City looking at the park adjacent to the old City Hall. They want to make that space more user friendly. In doing that, they are looking at some relocation possibilities for the sculptures there.

Mr. Canney began his PowerPoint presentation by noting that the project proposals include the Government Square Park and Centennial Mall Sculpture Relocation. They see this as a great opportunity to improve the Old City Hall park with TIF-generated funds from the Federal Place project. The proposed design is a much needed urban park that better serves the neighborhood including residents, workers and visitors. It also provides an opportunity to share the historical significance of the corner, as well as the Market Place and the Artesian Well. The Artesian Well supplied a fountain on Government Square with water that many people believed to have healing properties.

The sculpture is located on the east lawns of the old City Hall at 10<sup>th</sup> and O Streets. The sculpture represents two Egyptian gods, Ptah and Tem. They were commissioned with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and local matching funds.

A potential relocation site was discussed at Centennial Mall. Relocation considerations include the

following: uses of the current location have changed with the addition of residential housing and parking lot expansion; the opportunity for the sculptures to be in a higher profile location; relocation allows the opportunity to meet the goal of art on Centennial Mall; the Centennial Mall setting creates a more interactive stage for the sculpture and allows views from all sides; the materials of the sculpture integrate well on the mall; and the sculpture location is compatible with the most current adopted Mall Master Plan.

Ms. Kilgarin arrived at 8:16.

Mr. Canney noted that the process is to obtain the Certificate of Appropriateness to explore possible sculpture locations on Centennial Mall, get support from the original Mayor's Sculpture Committee and the Lincoln Arts Council, and invite the artist, Jene Highstein, to provide input.

In summary, it is a new opportunity for a much needed urban park in downtown Lincoln. It addresses the requirement of keeping City owned art on City owned property. It meets the need for art on the Mall, and it focuses new attention on Centennial Mall, possibly inspiring the need for renovation.

Mr. Laging asked about the reaction from the artist. Mr. Canney stated that Mr. Highstein is open to new ideas and is interested in possibly visiting the site. When asked about the timetable, Mr. McGee stated that the important thing is finding the right home for the sculpture. Once that is finalized, they could proceed with redeveloping the park.

Mr. Laging stated that he believes that the sculpture is a legitimate piece of art. Mr. Zimmer added that there is a thought that pieces along the mall need to be more monumental, and he believes this fits that description. He also noted that if the project were approved, the details of the location would need to be explored. Ms. Kilgarin stated that although she likes the sculpture, she feels it belongs at a park, not on the Mall.

Ms. Todd moved to approved the Certificate of Appropriateness to explore possible locations, seconded by Mr. Hewitt. Motion carried 4-1. Hewitt, Laging, Nelson, and Todd voting 'yes'; Kilgarin voting 'no'; O'Donnell and Searcy absent.

Mr. Laging departed at 8:34 a.m.

**Application by Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department for a Certificate of Appropriateness for sculpture on the public right-of-way adjacent to the Governor's Mansion, 14<sup>th</sup> and H Streets.**

Mr. Cole stated that they have been asked to place a Tour de Lincoln bike sculpture at 14<sup>th</sup> and H Streets. The name of the sculpture is *On the Trail of Evolution*.

Ms. Kilgarin noted that she has enjoyed the "bikes," but does not feel the Capitol Environs area is an appropriate location for it. Ms. Todd noted that she has enjoyed the bikes as well, but she believes that art in the Capitol Square right-of-way should be timeless rather than whimsical.

Ms. Todd moved to deny the Certificate of Appropriateness, seconded by Ms. Nelson. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Kilgarin, Nelson, and Todd voting 'yes'; Laging, O'Donnell, and Searcy absent.

***Request by Glen Cekal regarding streetscape features of South mall/South 15<sup>th</sup> Street***

Mr. Cekal stated that he has lived at 14<sup>th</sup> and C Streets for over 60 years. He noted that he has tried for

quite some time to get the City to improve C Street from 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>. Public Works agreed to do so from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup>. He stated that although he has been very happy over the last year with what has happened around the Capitol, he believes the Commission has been a little lax with the quality of the property within a mile radius of the Capitol. This could be a way to revitalize the area.

#### **Staff Report**

Mr. Zimmer informed the Committee that the Planning Director has implemented Comprehensive Plan amendments addressing capitol environs issues, specifically, to urge more public art and use of art in public works projects, to urge other governmental bodies to utilize the advice of the Capitol Environs Commission, and to strengthen the capital environs vista.

Ms. Todd moved to support these amendments, seconded by Ms. Kilgarin. Motion carried 4-0. Hewitt, Kilgarin, Nelson, and Todd voting 'yes'. Laging, O'Donnell, and Searcy absent.

Mr. Zimmer also informed the members that the City traffic engineer would like to make some changes to allow diagonal parking on A Street on the base of Centennial Mall. The Commission members in attendance unanimously agreed that there should not be any parking anywhere on the Mall.

#### **Miscellaneous**

There being no further business, Mr. Hewitt adjourned the meeting at 9:04 a.m.